



National

POISON PREVENTION WEEK PLANNER



www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov

FACT VS. FICTION ABOUT POISONINGS AND SAFETY

FICTION: Poisonings usually involve bleach and other household cleaners.

FACT: Household cleaners are just one type of poison. These products do cause many poisonings. Be aware that other poisons found at home can be just as dangerous. We keep many products around the home that we don't think of as poisons.

Among children, all of these things often cause poisonings:

- Medicines
- Pest killers
- Hydrocarbons (such as lamp oil, kerosene, gasoline, lighter fluid)
- Plants

Among adults, all of these things often cause poisonings:

- Pain medicines
- Alcohol
- Bites and stings
- Spoiled food
- Beauty products

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poison that can kill children and adults. CO is a gas that has no smell. You can't see it. You don't know when it's present. That makes it VERY DANGEROUS.

So, when it comes to poison prevention, be aware of ALL poisons. Almost anything can be poisonous if taken at the wrong time or in the wrong amount.

FICTION: Poinsettias are deadly.

FACT: Poinsettias are not deadly. But the plant does cause minor discomfort in some people. Many plants are poisonous. If a child eats any part of a non-food plant that people are not supposed to eat—or for more information—call your local Poison Center through the national toll-free Poison Help line, **1-800-222-1222**.



FICTION: Poisonings are not a great safety risk. People are hurt more often in cars, fires, and other accidents.

FACT: Poisonings happen more often than car accidents or house fires. That's true especially among young children. Did you know that each year in the United States:

- About 1 million possible poisonings are reported for children under 6.
- Approximately 90 percent of poisonings occur in the home.

Also, many people don't know about the poison risks linked to many products. So people are less careful about poison safety than about car or fire safety. It is important to (1) be aware of the dangers of different poisons and (2) take the same amount of care with poison safety as with other dangers.

FICTION: Regular operators answer the national toll-free Poison Help line.

FACT: Health care experts, including pharmacists, nurses, doctors, and poison experts work at Poison Centers across the country. One of these experts will answer the phone when you call the national toll-free Poison Help line (**1-800-222-1222**). All of these medical experts have passed special training to handle poison emergencies. Also, they are EXPERTS WHO SPECIALIZE IN THE ISSUES OF YOUR COMMUNITY. They are trusted by local doctors, pharmacists, nurses, and emergency workers. And they offer the best information on poison-related questions and treatments.

FICTION: Because Poison Help is a national number, it is hard for the experts to provide local help.

FACT: There are 60 Poison Centers around the country. If you call the national toll-free Poison Help line (**1-800-222-1222**), you are connected to the Poison Center in your area. **YOU WILL TALK TO A LOCAL EXPERT.** For any poison emergency or question, call your Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222**. You can talk to an expert any time of day or night, 7 days a week. Call this number from anywhere in the United States.

FICTION: The Poison Help number is only for emergencies. You should use it only when someone shows signs of poisoning.

FACT: If you think someone has been poisoned, call the national toll-free Poison Help line (**1-800-222-1222**). **DON'T WAIT** for signs of poisoning. Many poisonings can be avoided with a call to Poison Help. Your problem can most likely be solved on the phone. The medical experts will provide help for any possible poisoning, even if you are not sure if a poisoning has occurred. Call the national toll-free Poison Help line if you think your child may have swallowed poison. Call Poison Help if you have eaten food that was left out too long. **DO NOT WAIT** for signs of poisoning. Check with an expert at Poison Help (**1-800-222-1222**).

Poison Centers also provide teaching materials and services so you can learn about poisoning prevention **BEFORE** a problem arises.

FICTION: Most poisonings can be avoided by using basic common sense.

FACT: Common sense and awareness are valuable in poison prevention. Many people believe their common sense is enough to protect them, but common sense is not enough. It is still important to actively learn about poison safety. More than 80 percent of events reported to Poison Centers are accidents. Most reports involve common household products (such as medicines, cleaning products, and personal care products). Poisonings can happen because people mix medicines or keep products in unmarked containers. It can also happen when

people do not install carbon monoxide alarms or they leave cabinets unlocked. Often, poisonings could have been avoided by learning about and following simple steps.

FICTION: The national toll-free Poison Help line is important only for parents of young children.

FACT: Poison Help is an important tool for adults and children. Did you know that 50.7 percent of possible poisonings occur in children under age 6, BUT more than 70 percent of all poisoning deaths occur in adults ages 20 to 59?

Many adults are unaware that alcohol, medicines, and other products can poison you. Also, many adults do not guard against carbon monoxide poisoning. The national toll-free Poison Help line (**1-800-222-1222**) can provide help with ANY poisoning situation, no matter your age. You can talk to an expert 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

FICTION: If someone has been poisoned, call 911, not Poison Help.

FACT: 911 is the number to call in emergencies. If it does not appear to be a life-threatening emergency, call the national toll-free Poison Help line for poisoning help. Poison Help is best at handling poisonings and answering questions about them. Often an expert at the national toll-free Poison Help line (**1-800-222-1222**) can help you over the phone. The expert can give first aid advice. He or she can tell you what to look for. In fact, about 70 percent of poisonings are taken care of over the phone. A call to the national toll-free Poison Help line (**1-800-222-1222**) could save you money on a costly emergency room visit.

If the poison expert thinks you have an emergency that requires hands-on care, the expert will tell you to call 911. It is important to keep 911 in mind for ALL other emergencies. In any situation—even poisonings—if someone is not breathing, you should call 911 fast!

[Back to Top](#)